A PARAENETICK OR HUMBLE ADDRESSE TO THE PARLIAMENT AND *ASSEMBLY* FOR (NOT LOOSE, BUT) CHRISTIAN LIBERTIE.

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A

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THERE have been many *Nayles and Goades* ſharpened in this Argument, by *Maſters of the Aſſemblies*, if there were but a ſteady hand to drive them home, and faſten them. The LORD faſten them by his Spirit, in the hearts of all whom they concerne, of all before whom now lyes an opportunitie of *killing and making alive*, that yee doe not now put out that onely Coale that is left to us, (after all our ſufferings and privations) our *Chriſtian Libertie*.

How have wee promiſed our ſelves (not in the leaſt diffiding the Reaſonableneſſe of ſuch an Expectation) *that though wee did eat the bread of affliction, and drink the water of adverſitie, yet our eyes ſhould ſee our Teachers, and they ſhould no more be thruſt into Corners?* And if this hope faile us, wee are of all *men moſt miſerable*. Had wee not better, if wee had looked at our ſelves onely, and not at the common Cauſe, while wee had ſomething, to have betaken our ſelves into ſome remote Iland; then after the loſſe of all to

have it ſet on the ſcore of a mercy and kindnes to us, to be quietly diſmiſt thither? Wherein wee ſhould finde it (for wee already feele the workings of it) no ſmall aggravation of our Affliction, the Conſideration of thoſe from whoſe faces we flee. If it were an Enemy, (deare Friends and Brethren) if it were the Biſhops doings, wee ſhould not marvaile, we could better beare it; but what, you, our Brethren, our Companions once in the ſame iron yoke and furnace of affliction, (the deareſt Remembrance that can be) that *have prayed and faſted together in Corners*, that *have ſate and wept together by the Rivers of Babylon, remembring Sion; and hanged our Harps upon the Willowes*, bemoaning our ſelves oft to one another; and are the ſame men ſtill both for Religion toward God, and affection toward you! *O tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in Askelon, leſt the Philiſtiims rejoyce, and the daughter of the uncircumciſed triumph.* Let not Malignants heare of it, Papiſts and Atheiſts, Neutrall Proteſtants, and hollow-hearted Profeſſors: and oh *that the thouſand yeares* were begun that the Devill were ſhut up too, (who rather is let looſe now) that there be not joy in hell for the diviſions of the Brethren! But ſeemes it not reaſonable to you (that which ſeemes ſo reaſonable to Chriſt) that we who have *ſuffered* with you, ſhould *reigne* with you, and that Comfort being reſtored to *Jeruſalem*, all her *mourners* ſhould have a ſhare in it? Or are wee thoſe vaſſalls alone that now in this yeare of *Jubilee*, muſt whether wee will or no, have our eares boared, when all other liberties are vindicated? Is it for that wee have no *Tertullus* to plead our Cauſe, or for that wee are few and peaceable, and you may uſe us how you liſt? Sure it is not in you to make ſo ill an uſe of our good Principles? However, be it knowne to you, *our Redeemer is ſtrong*, and though he be gone a long journey, yet he will come upon thoſe *Evill ſervants*, that (ſecure through his delay) fall a beating in ſtead of feeding their fellow-ſervants; *He will come in an houre when they are not aware, and look not for him*; as he did before your eyes upon the domineering generation of the Prelacy. The more you oppreſſe us, the more wee ſhall grow. *Refraine from us therefore, and let us alone; for if this Counſell, or this work be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, yee cannot overthrow it, leſt haply yee be found fighters againſt God.* Stand therefore to Gods arbitrament. If we build upon the true foundation, *with hay and ſtubble,*

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the day ſhall declare it; for it ſhall be revealed by fire, and our work ſhall be burnt, though wee ſhall be ſaved.

Prejudice not your ſelves further (Brethren) or your way: For God hath ſaid; **There ſhall be no deſtroying beaſt in all his holy Mountaine.* The Beaſts of prey come from *Mount Seir*, not from *Mount Sion*. *Eſau* was rough, hairy, and lordly: *Jacob* was ſmooth, plaine, and pleaſant. Is it a forme agreeable to you, to be as that Image in *Nebuchadnezzars* Viſion, *That was dreadfull and terrible, having great iron teeth, devouring and breaking in pieces, and ſtamping the reſidue with the feet?* Or will you not rather *ride on and proſper, becauſe of truth, and righteouſneſſe, and meekneſſe?* So ſhould you carry the hearts and votes of all men along with you, *but thoſe that are loſt*. And we truſted wee had ſeene a hopefull beginning, that wee might have improved to a greater Expectation; when (beſides former expreſſe incouragements miniſtred to us by pregnant paſſages of great note and obſervation with us in certain Declarations or Ordinances of Parliament, which except need be, we are loath to repeat) God had lately put it into the heart of the Parliament, to conſider the juſt and mercifull accommodation of tender Conſciences. Which makes us the more amazed and aſtoniſhed at the ſudden prejudice wee ſeeme to have received in their affections, and the varied, yea, contrary aſpect both of Parliament and Aſſembly upon us, who are no other then wee were before, and have continued in your ſeverall and reſpective ſervice and aſſiſtance, with the ſame faithfulneſſe ſince as ever: Wherein God hath been very mercifull unto us, (whether it be acknowledged to us or no, it muſt be acknowledged by us to him) that hath made us faithfull, and not one Inſtance can be given of the contrary: **And wee lookt for peace, and there's no good, and for the time of healing, and behold trouble*; Yet wee are neither ſo prophane nor deſperate, as (with *Eſau*) to ſell our Birth-right for a meſſe of pottage, nor our hopes in your Juſtice and Clemency, for the quiet injoyment of it, for a thing of naught. Wee hope this ſeeming remiſſion and intermiſſion of theſe Counſels of peace in behalfe of us, ſhall but make them rebound the higher, and run the ſtronger. And therefore wee ceaſe not to pray for you, (moſt juſt Senators) that God would hide repentance from your eyes; that the Lord that ſtirr'd up *Cyrus*, *Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*, and wedg'd them in by his powerfull

* Eſay 11. 9.

* Jer. 14. 19.

full Spirit would keep this in the thought and purpoſe of your heart, till you have brought it to perfection. Truly there is a dreadfull opportunity before you of gladding the hearts of thouſands, your kindneſſe unto whom Chriſt will put upon his own account; a dreadfull opportunity, I ſay, if either omitted, or not proportionably improved. Let it never be ſaid, yee did run well, who did hinder you? nay, who can hinder you, or who ſhall harm you, if you be followers of that that is good? There is nothing (under Chriſt) wanting to make us live quietly by one another, though of ſeverall judgements, whileſt wee agree in fundamentals, but your word to bid us do ſo.

Is it not time for the Lords Harbengers and Trumpeters, to ſound the allarm to the great and dreadfull day of the Lord, and to apply your ſelves now *to turn the heart of fathers to the children and of the children to the fathers, leſt the Lord come and ſmite the earth with a curſe?* Nay, hath he not ſorely ſmitten us, for not only the neglect, but the contempt of this preſcription by a contrary practiſing, even ſetting the Fathers, the nurſing-fathers of the Church (thoſe that ſhould be ſo) againſt their children? And indeed excuſe us, if when wee conſider how faire wee were for a good iſſue of the common troubles of late, when God gave us thoſe many Occaſions, and thoſe ſolemne opportunities of praiſe and thankſgiving, when ſome can ſay (if ever) they found their hearts then drawn forth in earneſt ſupplications and triumphant expectations of a ſmooth ſucceſſe; and in ſtead thereof, what an unuſuall return we had from the hand of God, contrary to the tenour of his former proceedings, beating back our hopes upon us? and when we compare this with former the like paſſages of providence in the like juncture of times; (as that ill ſucceſſe that interrupted the Petition ready to be preſented at the Common-Councel againſt us) and alſo compare theſe with ſome Scriptures, and Scripture examples, how God hath made *Jeruſalem a burthenſome ſtone, &c.* Zech. 12. and how he hath formerly rebuked Kings for his peoples ſakes, ſaying, *Touch not mine anointed, &c.* and how hee brought *Artaxerxes* and his Realm under wrath for that cauſe, *Ezra* 7. and conſider how righteous this is, that if the children fall out the father ſhould make the third; excuſe us, I ſay, if wee can give no better account of theſe things but the Lords jealouſie over his peoples liberties.

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Wherefore, if pity will not move you, let equity at leaſt conſtrain you: * *Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother*, ſaith the Apoſtle. Have you taken of us a price? deny us not our commodity; Chriſt bought our liberties for us with his blood, wee have bought them over again at your hands with our own blood, ſhed not for our ſelves only, but for you alſo. Wee have ſet you down, as it were, where you would be; wee have diſlodged the *Canaanites* before you, wee are neceſſitated to paſſe on further; it were but your duty to march on before us, and give us quiet poſſeſſion with you. Wee have fought, and adventured purſe and perſon upon this expectation of Liberty, (not of another Religion, but) of this Way of walking in your Religion; as of the Liberty of the Religion it ſelf, which we eyed in the firſt place; If nothing leſſe was in your hearts, why did you not tell us ſo? Nay, why hath the Aſſembly born us in hand with ſuch hopes and intimations? Why have ſuch Conſiderations been tendered to us, intimating; nay, almoſt aſſuring us, an after-liberty upon condition of a preſent modeſty in that juncture of time only. For what elſe is the tenour of the 5th Conſideration, publiſhed, *Dec.* 23. 1643. in theſe words, That it is not to be doubted, but the Counſels of the Aſſembly, and the care of the Parliament will be, not only to reform and ſet up Religion throughout the Nation, but will concurre *to preſerve what ever ſhall appeare to be the* RIGHTS *of particular* CONGREGATIONS, *according to the Word, and to be ſo with ſuch, whoſe Conſciences cannot in all things conform to the publike Rule, ſo far as the Word of God would have them born with all*, which is all that we deſire. What did you do with thoſe terms, *The Rights of particular Congregations?* and theſe contradiſtinguiſhed to the generall Reformation and ſetting up of Religion through the Kingdome, if you did not ſpeak to our ſenſe? But (you will ſay) 'tis cautioned, *What ever ſhall appeare according to the Word.* To whom mean you it ſhould appeare? To your ſelves? What promiſe were this? To preſerve what ever appeares to you, is not *grace*, but *debt*; and if this was your meaning, you might have ſaid more properly, When ever theſe Rights ſhould appeare to you; and if by [*according to the Word*] you meant only, in your own interpretation, that's not thank-worthy: what bait is held out to us therein, but a miſerable colluſion? But the latter part of the Conſideration is more expreſſe,

* 1 Theſ. 4. 6.

expreſſe, which promiſe *a bearing with thoſe whoſe Conſciences cannot in all things conform to the publike Rule.* And what though it follow, *ſo far as the word of God would have them born withall?* for that implies a conceſſion, that the *word would have them born withall*; otherwiſe, why do you bob our mouths with theſe Apples of liberty and toleration, and condeſcend to terms of the meaſure thereof, if no ſuch thing in any degree be due unto us, or warrantable by the Word? Why then do you give place to us ſo much, as for an houre? and if a toleration duly bounded be divine, then how have you indeavoured it? or why do you not indeavour that degree? What jot or tittle of toleration have you yet brought forth, or do you give us hopes of in your proceeding hitherto? What things more terrible and more void and excluſive of all bearing and forbearing can you meditate yet, then Fines, Priſons, Exile, prohibiting the exerciſe of our *Way* and our *Miniſtery*, but upon hard conditions; which things we have too much cauſe to feare and expect, as not much exceeding the rate and proportion of ſome preſent concluſions, and more menacing agitations. Judge now whether the performance of this Conſideration be not yet wholly in arrere to us.

And to minde you of ſome other paſſages; What do you in that earneſt intreating Miniſters and People (*Conſid. 6.*) to forbeare for a convenient time, the joyning themſelves into Church-ſocieties, *untill they ſee whether the right Rule will not be commended to them in an orderly way?* I ſay, what do you in this, but ſet us at liberty afterwards? And why do you there beſpeak us as free-men if you made account (and it be in your power) to make us bond-men, or uſe us ſo? And further, why doth the Aſſembly (in the 7th *Conſideration*) glance with that congratulatory reſpect upon the liberty to ſerve God according to his Word, which we injoy in this time, more then hath been at any time in *England* ſince the beginning of the Reformation, if it be not a juſt liberty? and if it be juſt, why doth it begin to be contracted? at leaſt ſome part of that liberty wee have injoy'd? *viz.* preaching without ordination, till wee can have it according to our conſciences? And laſtly, do you not cheriſh as great a hope in us, as all that wee have ask'd, or ſhall aske, comes to, in the laſt *Conſideration*; where you pawn your own hopes to cheriſh ours, that wee ſhall never

never come to suffer for doing what shall appeare to be our duty, though not co-incident with the publique Rule given us; where you must mean what shall apeare [*to us*] to be our duty; for wee cannot feare we shall ever suffer by you for what appeares [*to you*] to be our duty. And how can you be comforters of us in our sufferings, as you are in the sequele of that *Consideration*, if they be not *sufferings for righteousnesse sake?* and if they be, how miserable men are you, to be the authors of them? Or do you count it no suffering for all the Ministers of this *Way* to be deprived of their livelihoods and opportunities to serve God with their gifts, and their flocks depending on them bereft of their food? Pardon this repetition, it is not done to reproach or upbraid you, but timely to warn and remember you.

These were not over forward expressions only dropping casually from some more remisse and neutrall spirits undertaking for you without your warrant (which you might judge it credulity in us to reckon upon, and injury to challenge you by) but serious deliberations and conclusions of your own ministred to us by some in the name of you all, not whisper'd in the eare, but published to the world, and to be understood in the proper, plain, and naturall sense of the words and phrases commonly, holding forth to us a bait of timely and seasonable liberty. Now your intention herein was either fained, meerly to make us sleep away our opportunity upon the knees of vain promises and hopes, till your cords were twisted, and your bonds upon us; and so all these passages are but φαινόμενα, empty forms, and shapes, words fill'd with wind, condensed by a sleighty contexture, into a very promising and specious appearance only, which is not to speake the truth in Christ, but to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Him: Or your intention was reall, as indeed purposing to gratifie and accommodate us after the Rule agreed upon for the Kingdome; and so there was reality in your words, which is that alone that honest men will offer, and wise men consider; and if so, this design was either good or evill: If evill, then it might not be undertaken for the greatest good that could come thereof; and why do you not retract and repent publikely of giving such hopes in your Considerations? But if it were good and just, why is it not pursued? Whether these do call upon you audibly, being your own words,

promiſes, ingagements, let all indifferent men judge; but ſurely our lives ſpent for you cry aloud for love and mercy to be ſhewed us from you; *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the mouth of the Oxe that treadeth out the corne: Hee that planteth a Vineyard, ſhall eat of the fruit thereof.* Doth God take care for Oxen? would hee not have us die in an Oxes debt? and is it meet and congruous his children (whom he can maintain without being beholding to the world) ſhould hire out themſelves for nothing more then the common, when they fain would, but cannot live upon it? God forbid all our priviledge ſhould be, that wee ſhall be laſt eaten, that when you have done with the more dangerous enemy, you ſhould turn your hand upon us; ſhall this foul blot of ingratitude lie upon you? Will you ſo bury all your fame and glorious achievements in ſo horrid a pit? Will you ſo diſappoint the expectation of meek ſouls, who hope for this, as an additionall recompence (next to the liberties of the Kingdome, and of the Proteſtant Religion) for the lives of Brethren, Husbands, Friends loſt in the publique ſervice and defence? How inacceſſible ſoever ſuch cries may be to your eares now through the multitude of your buſineſſes and tumultuouſneſſe of your thoughts for preſent; yet ſure there will be a dead of the night, when the leaſt noiſe will be heard; I had rather ſay, there will be a morning, when your eyes will be opened, and *it will not repent you*, the kindneſſe you have ſhewed, and the violence you have forborn to tender conſciences. Good, my brethren, is your ſleep too ſweet unto you, and your beds too ſoft, and your conſciences at too much eaſe, that you deſire to create more trouble unto your ſelves, and to bring the neglected *votes of the dead* (ſacred among all) upon you, who laid down their lives upon no other condition, then *Liberty*, firſt of the Kingdome, then of the Conſcience in the Proteſtant Religion, that they nor you might be inſlav'd in either; would it not ſhame you, the cry of the widows and orphanes of ſuch perſons. Do you take away my liberty, reſtore my husband who died to purchaſe it for you? would it not ſcare you, ſhould the Ghoſts of thoſe perſons that have died in this Cauſe (thoſe many hundred ſouls, that while they lived, were laden with the reproach of their conſciences, but ſufficiently vindicated the worthineſſe of their ſpirits by their doings and ſufferings ſo freely, ſo cheerfully undertaken:) I ſay, ſhould they

come

come to your bed-ſides and cry, Give us our lives againe; we laid them downe for your liberty, performe the like for us; or beare the guilt of ingratitude, and injuſtice? O ſhould they but tell you the lamentable Stories of their warfare, what affections of deareſt Relations they conflicted withall, and were faine to deſpiſe and over-rule with an high hand in their firſt ingagements, even tearing themſelves from wives and children, almoſt contrary to the Apoſtles Rule, and far exceeding the higheſt diſpenſation for the moſt abſolute ſervice of *prayer and faſting*: And what hardſhip they endured of hunger and cold, and watchings, and wearineſſe: What wounds they have ſuſtain'd, what ſtreames of bloud they have loſt, what agonies they have been in, and how they have borne downe with a high hand all ſtarting doubts and feares, leſt they ſhould not ſow a conſiderable advantage unto themſelves in thoſe adventures, and whether or no they ſhould indeed water a crop of ingenuous (nay Chriſtian) liberty to you and themſelves, or their poſteritie at leaſt with their bloud: Should they tell you, how they have undertaken to their owne miſgiving hearts and cautelous ſpirits, that their labour ſhould not be in vaine, that they ſhould not loſe their lives for naught, they did not ſerve ſuch Maſters: No, they were confident *another Pharaoh muſt ariſe*, before *Joſeph* ſhould be forgotten: Should they but tell you, how their Faith did put in bayle to their Reaſon, and how this comforted them in all their anguiſh, and it made their farewell out of this life ſweet; and twas the laſt proſpect or Landskip of this Iland that they ſaw, they beheld it as *the habitation of righteouſneſſe, the faithfull Citie*. Should they tell you, how ambitious they were of wounds, how prodigall of their bloud, how deſirous to dye, that by their death they might make a feaſt of *libertie* to their Brethren in this particular. And ſhould they from thence fall to this Expoſtulation; Shall wee dye for you, and muſt not our friends *live* with you, who are of the ſame religion with you? Did you ſend us out to be cut off, and to make a hand of us? Did you ſlay part of us in the field with the ſword of the Enemy, that you might the eaſier ſuppreſſe the reſidue at home? Do you count us no better then to be ſwords-meat, and to ſtop the mouthes of Canons? *O Earth, cover thou not our bloud, the Lord behold it and require it.* Should ſuch a din fill your eares ſleeping and waking,

what fruit would you have of your violent proceedings? Should you effect your purposes, suppresse our Way, and cast forth our persons out of this good Land, could you put the price of our bloud into the treasury? Would you have any *list to roast what you had got by such hunting?* Would not your stomacks nauseate and turne againe at the raw and bloudy cruelty of the game? Take up, Oh take up betimes, *know you not that it will be bitternesse in the latter end?* Are we not your fellow-servants and Brethren? Did not the same hand make us, that made you? And is there not one Father of us both? One Lord, one Faith, one Baptisme, one Religion? Are you the onely rightfull Inhabitants of this good Countrey? And is there not a curse denounced against *those that lay house to house, and land to land, that they may dwell alone?* Doe you stand in no more need of us, or have wee been reprieved till now, onely as the *Canaanites* to help you to master the Lyons, & the wild Beasts, that they prevaile not against you?

Brethren, I would to God there were no Divisions among us; I wish it under the Imperiall law of Heaven, and my hearts desire and prayer for *England* is, that they were of one heart, and one way: But is that upon any Scripture-ground to be expected here (at least till those *Halcyon* dayes come) while we *know but in part?* Must we never be of one heart, till we be of one way? Then belike those Exhortations *to love, and peace, and Christian forbearance of one another; and not to judge, but to keep the unitie of the Spirit*, are not visions which the Apostles saw for these dayes. *The time is not yet*, as the *Jewes* said, *Hag.* 2. But the Lord may answer us as he answered them; *Is it time for you, O yee to dwell in your seiled houses, &c?* So is it time for (a) you to agree and make your common engagement against any of the Lambes of Christ, the ground of a renewed friendship? Is it a time for Papists, Atheists, loose and carnall

(a) *Quod si squamæ Leviathan ita cohæreant, ut earum opere textili densato, quasi loricatus incedat Satan & Cataphractus, quod de fœdere concordiæ quo Malignantis Ecclesiæ membra se complexa muniunt & circumvallant; Elegantissimè Lutherus & verè: Cur immane quantũ hient, obsecro, quasi ruinam universæ fabricæ minitantes, inhientq; quasi vasto fœdoq; rictu se devoraturi vivi lapides in vero Templo collocati? Præsertim cum & veri meriq; lapides in veteri Templo tam artificiose, non tantum sine deformi Cicatrice vulneris, sed & sine subtilissimæ suturæ notis, inoculati viserentur, ut imponerent oculo spectatoris, quod à nonnullis observatum, & facta pene fide renunciarent, ei quasi tota moles in tantam magnitudinem, ex unico ingenti lapide, tam magnifica consurgeret.* Says our *Stoughton* in his *Fælicitas ultimi sæculi. pag.* 40.

Protestant-

Proteſtants and Malignants to agree, laying aſide their particular intereſts, opinions, and differences? Is it a time for *French*, and *Spaniards*, and *Danes*, and *Walloones*, and *Iriſh Rebells* to agree and make a confederacy with our homeborne Vipers againſt the truth? And is it not a time for us to agree for the truth? Is it a time for godly able men, that have in a great part renounced the hidden things of Antichriſtian darknes, to agree with ignorant ſuperſtitious Ceremony-mongers, (that are devoted ſtill to a Common-Prayer-Booke, and petition for a Captain to lead them back into *Ægypt*) and with the meaneſt and unworthieſt ſpirits, (that will but ſerve the time, and acknowledge their ſoveraignte) as good Chriſtians and able Miniſters, to make their party ſtronger? And is it not a time to agree with thoſe that denying themſelves, and the world, profeſſe to ſeek the truth in love. Is all truth among one ſort of men? Hath not Chriſt rendred his members all in a mutuall need of one another? * Is your way *the fulneſſe of him that fills all in all?* Can your refuſe-Brethren in Conference and Communication of ſpirituall gifts, adde nothing to you? Is there not moſt, oft-times, in things that are moſt deſpiſed?

Would Chriſt have ſuch deſperate Experiments practiſed upon his members, to *kill* them, if you cannot *cure* them of their leſſer errours; to fine them, priſon them, baniſh them, which to ſome perſons and eſtates, is little more mercy then to knock them on the head? Doth not nature teach to beare with a blain or blemiſh, rather then to deſtroy the body? Is Chriſt ſo put to it, quite out of hope? May they not be gained hereafter? Are their opinions damnable, either in themſelves, or proper conſequences? Are they not further ingaged to perſiſt in their wayes good or bad, by ſuffering *for ſuch* things ſo deeply, and is not the bridge of retractation drawne up thereby?

Conſider theſe things, and take heed what you doe unto theſe men; the Lord hath made *Jeruſalem* a burdenſome ſtone, that ſhall cruſh all that attempt to remove her. If our Way be of God, you cannot overthrow it; You may ſhew your ſelves fighters againſt God, and get the reward of ſuch, and that's all. Take heed of walking contrary unto God, of caſting ſhame on thoſe, on whom he hath reflected ſuch eminent honour, both in the Army and otherwiſe: For I aske you, By whom hath God more deliver'd us hitherto?

* Which cloſe Conjunction & Cementing is made onely by love. Men may be of the ſame judgement, yet ſit very looſe frō one another. Heads touch like 2 Globes but in *puncto*. Hearts joyne in *plano*. and make an incorporation of each into other.

hitherto? Who have ſhewed themſelves more valiant in fight? who have oftner put to flight the *Armies of the Aliens* in the North, and elſ-where, but thoſe men that in the end ſhall be put to flight themſelves, if ſome may have their will? *The ſword of the Lord*, and deſpiſed *Gideon*, hath ſaved this Nation: *Saul hath ſlaine his thouſands, and David his ten thouſands.* Let no man envy. God will be acknowledged in his Inſtruments, as well as in his Attributes. *Take heed of reſiſting the Holy Ghoſt; for that mighty works have been done by theſe men, you cannot deny:* their power in prayer, their ſhining doctrine, their exemplary burning converſation, though wee will not paint the blemiſhes of any of them. But *manum de tabula*, I have offer'd my candle; it is in the Lord to proportion the ſucceſſe: To ſome it may be a word in ſeaſon: to others perhaps it will be *a ſnare and a ſtone of ſtumbling.*

Tandem vincet veritas, Truth ſhall overcome I verily beleeve and expect. *The little Stone cut out of the Mountaine without hands*, ſhall irreſiſtibly grow, and *fill the whole earth*: and *every plant that the Heavenly Father hath not planted, ſhall be pulld up.* Men may root out themſelves by perſecution, as the Prelates have done; but they ſhall never root up the truth.

Chriſtian friends and Brethren, if the truth be on your ſide, confide to your Cauſe; ceaſe from force and violence, that you reflect not diſparagement upon it.

I would end, as I began, in the ſpirit of love and meekneſſe; *Conſider your calling Brethren, that you are called unto peace*; and take our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for an example, who though he was Lord of all, yet became a ſervant unto all. He was further above his Diſciples in knowledge and underſtanding, then the wiſeſt among us above the ſimpleſt Infant; yet he diſdain'd them not, provoked them not, upbraided them not, puniſht them not, taught them as they were able to beare; after his reſurrection comes to them alwayes with this ſalutation, *Peace be unto you*; and ſince his aſcenſion, every Epiſtle brings commendations of *grace and peace.* Conſider of what a ſpirit yee are, and ought to ſhew, a Dove-like ſpirit, and oh that *the voice of this Turtle were heard in our Land!*

Were not the nature of my diſcourſe indifferent and generall, I might ſay ſomewhat, which might not onely induce liberty, (as for every way not ſcandalous) but alſo beget a good opinion of the

the *Congregationall way* in speciall. I will say but this; (a) *The members of this societie grow up freely unto it; act freely in it to mutuall comfort and edification; they meddle with their own things, and are not busie with others, without authoritie from Christ: They are ready to advise, and be advised upon every lawfull call and needfull occasion: They count not themselves perfect, but stand ready to receive further light, yea, though from the meanest of the Brethren: They aspire to be punctuall, yet they allow many graines to other Churches, so they have the substance: They are no otherwise Independent, but as they depend more upon Christ, and lesse upon men: Though their first and immediate regards be to their own, yet they count themselves debters to all the Churches and members of Christ: They will doe what good they can to rectifie the mistakes of others that are not of them, but know no remedy but patience, if the truth fall not upon all mens apprehensions: They say not more might not be done or devised to reclaime men from errours, but they say they have Commission for no more then they practise, and they dare not say a Confederacy with any meanes, with which the Lord hath not said a Confederacy by his Institution: They boast not in their Way, as approving it selfe to flesh and bloud, but as a way of faith, justified onely of the Children of Wisdome, that have learnt to put off their owne understanding and fleshly dependance in the things of God, and to lay the weight of all on Christ, who hath given his Word for it. Lastly, They will communicate in all Ordinances with any true Church of Christ, that walks up to their light, and shews a readines to receive whatsoever more shall be shewed them.*

The *Congregationall way* characterized.

Now take this *Way*, and compare it with any other, wisely, spiritually and impartially, according to that *Rule given by our Saviour; and wee will stand to the issue and arbitrament of it. Let that Way which raises the foundation of mans glory, and wholly applyes it selfe to the glory of Christ the Founder, *hanging* absolutely on him for a *Word*, either expresse or els by consequence, to every thing, and a *blessing* on every thing they undertake or doe, resolving all into his care of them, and presence among them; be acknowledged, countenanced, and practised among us, as the Way and truth of God, having no unrighteousnesse in it.

* Joh. 7. 18.

And let that Way which neglecting or denying Christs sufficiency of rule and direction, and the promise of his grace and protection, apply themselves to man, to supply them with precepts, and support them with the fleshly arme of numbers and multitudes,

tudes, of power and authoritie, be diſcarded as the way of man.

And if wee after all our caſting and contriving, cannot come to you, ſee (if you would not be wanting to this Accord which you have ſo much in your mouths) if you can come to us; which no queſtion, but *all* that are godly could moſt heartily doe, as ſome of you have expreſt in termes upon ſerious conſideration of our Way, (for what is there to offend you, but a further degree of puritie aymed at in the body, the worſhip being alike in both?) and others in termes æquivalent, as that they beleeve it will not ceaſe till it come to this Way, which they grant was the Primitive way, and is the pureſt, and the *Presbyterian way* is but a ſtep thereto, and will reſt here as its center, and end in this as its perfection. For our parts, wee have waited mannerly all this while, and wee are heartily grieved, that the particulars of difference between us remaine yet ſo many, nay, that there are any, and eſpecially ſo important, that we cannot yeeld to you therein. For as he ſaid well, *Amicus Plato, Amicus Ariſtoteles, ſed magis amica veritas.*

FINIS.